

The Michigan Judicial Institute presents:

Adoption Workgroup

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Committee Overview

- Formed by Chief Justice Corrigan
- Focus on trial courts
- Partnership with FIA

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Four Problem Areas Identified

1. High numbers of children in foster care
 - ✓ Over 18,000 in year 2000

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Four Problem Areas (continued)

2. Compliance with Federal Mandates

- ✓ Adoption and Safe Families Act imposes time-sensitive deadlines upon the states
- ✓ Financial penalties to states for non-compliance
- ✓ **Michigan strengths:**
 - Meeting case review standards every 6 months
 - Providing process for termination of rights
- ✓ **Michigan weaknesses:**
 - Written case plan for every child
 - Permanency planning every 12 months
 - Process to involve foster parents in Review Hearings

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Four Problem Areas (continued)

3. Involvement of Relatives in Process

- ✓ Distance sometimes a barrier
- ✓ Poor parenting sometimes a factor (*they raised the respondents*)
- ✓ Reduces parental incentive to participate
- ✓ Weigh negatives against preference for relatives – public policy

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Four Problem Areas (continued)

4. Case Processing Delays

- ✓ Average of one year on appeal delays permanency
- ✓ Court of Appeals has issued its own plan for reducing delays

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Recommendations

1. Encourage filing termination petitions in less than 42 days after Permanency Planning Hearings (PPH)
 - MCR 3.976 (E) (2)
2. Encourage shortened interval between PPH
 - MCR 3.976 (E) (1)

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Recommendations – cont’d

3. Priority in Scheduling
 - MCR 3.977 (C)
4. Early identification of Parents/Relatives/Interested Parties/Physicians
 - MCR 3.965 (B)
 - MCR 3.965 (E)

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Recommendations – cont’d

5. Ensuring Participation of Interested Persons at Reviews
 - MCR 3.975 (B) – Dispositions
 - MCR 3.976 (C) – PPH
6. Controlling Substitution of Attorneys for Children and Visits by Attorney-GAL
 - MCR 3.915 (D)
 - MCR 3.915 (B) (2) (a)

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Recommendations – cont’d

7. Improved Reporting Requirements
 - “Report Card” from SCAO
8. Cooperation with FIA Program Improvement Plan
9. Education and Training Programs

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Recommendations – cont’d

10. Public Outreach to Promote Adoption
11. Endorse Delay Reduction Initiatives Court of Appeals
12. Foster Inter-Agency Cooperation
13. Develop and Consider Innovative Solutions

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